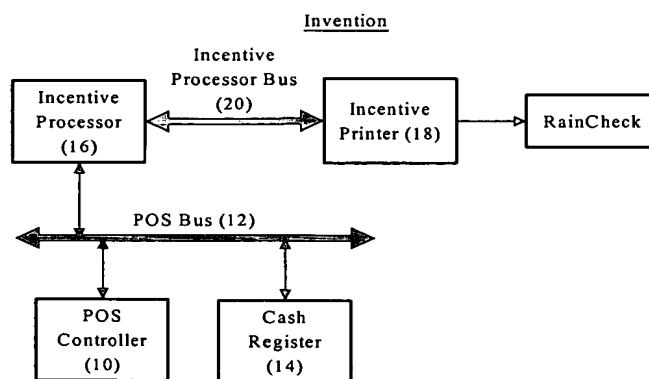


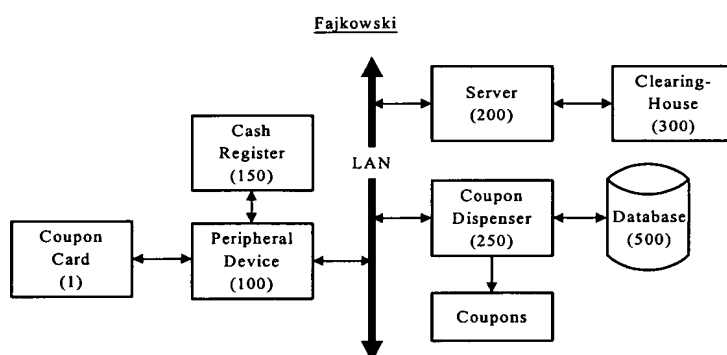
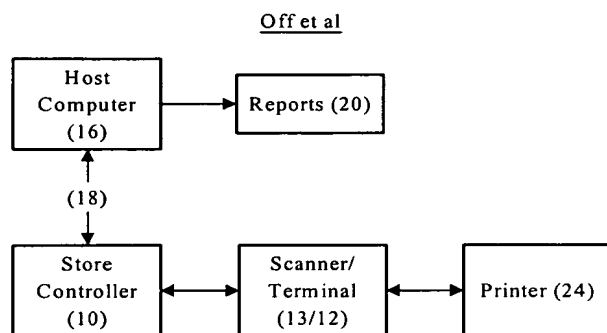
arguments as substantially provided herein were discussed. Although no agreement was reached, Applicant's representative noted what are believed to be patentably distinguishing differences between the claimed invention and the applied references, whether taken alone or in combination, as will be further discussed herein. In addition, as requested by Examiner Lastra during the interview, arguments regarding lack of motivation for modifying and/or combining the applied references so as to arrive at the claimed invention directed to a raincheck system, process and computer program product are further discussed herein.

As a preliminary matter, Applicant again notes that the IDS filed March 2, 2000, appears to not have been considered by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests consideration of the IDS by returning the form PTO 1449 included therein initialed by the Examiner.

Applicant respectfully submits that independent Claims 1, 9, 17 and 25 and claims dependent therefrom are patentably distinguishable over Off et al and Fajkowski, taken alone or in combination, based on the following discussion.

Applicant submits that Off et al and Fajkowski, taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest Applicant's invention, as recited in independent Claims 1, 9, 17 and 25. The following figures correspond to Applicant's claimed invention and the inventions of Off et al and Fajkowski to illustrate the differences therebetween.





Applicant respectfully submits that as is evident from the above-noted figures, Off et al fail to teach or suggest an incentive processor, an incentive printer coupled to the incentive processor via an incentive processor bus, a POS controller coupled to the incentive processor via a POS bus, and a cash register coupled to the POS controller via the POS bus, as recited in the claimed invention. Applicant notes that the present Office Action asserts that Off et al teach the claimed POS bus citing Figure 1 of Off et al.

However, Applicant notes that the only elements in Figure 1 of Off et al that may be arguably considered to be buses are line 18, which may be a telephone line or some other communication link (column 3, lines 39-41 of Off et al) and the connections between the store controller 10 and the terminals 12. Applicant submit that even if line 18 were considered a POS bus, Off et al would still fail to teach or suggest a cash register coupled

thereto, as in the claimed invention, since the terminal 12, which may arguably be considered to correspond to the claimed cash register, is coupled to the store controller 10 and not the line 18. Similarly, the printer 24 of Off et al is coupled to the terminal 12 and not to an incentive processor, as in the claimed invention.

In addition, even if the connections between the store controller 10 and the terminals 12 were considered a POS bus, Off et al would still fail to teach or suggest an incentive processor coupled thereto, as in the claimed invention, since the host computer 16, which is later argued to be considered to correspond to the claimed incentive processor based on the teachings of Fajkowski, is coupled to the store controller 10 and not the connections between the store controller 10 and the terminals 12. Furthermore, the printer 24 of Off et al is coupled to the terminal 12 and not to an incentive processor, as in the claimed invention.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that neither the line 18 connection between the host computer 16 and the store controller 10 nor the connections between the store controller 10 and the terminals 12 of Off et al teach or suggest the POS bus, as in the claimed invention.

Based on the above discussion, Applicant submits that Off et al fails to teach or suggest the noted features of Applicant's invention, as recited in independent Claims 1, 9, 17 and 25.

Applicant submits that Fajkowski merely teaches a server 200 that may be used for coupon processing (column 22, line 10 to column 23, line 5 of Fajkowski) for implementing a paperless coupon system (column 2, lines 11-33 of Fajkowski), but fail to cure the noted deficiencies in Off et al. The present Office Action asserts that it would have been obvious to include the server 200 of Fajkowski in the invention of Off et al to arrive at the claimed incentive processor. However, as noted above, neither the line 18 connection between the host computer 16 and the store controller 10 nor the connections between the store controller

10 and the terminals 12 of Off et al teach or suggest the POS bus, as in the claimed invention. Accordingly, even if such a modification were obvious, which Applicant submits is not the case, the system of Off et al as modified by Fajkowski would still fail to teach or suggest the noted features of the claimed invention.

In addition, since the system of Off et al includes a store controller 10 for coupon processing (column 3, lines 39-65 of Off et al), one of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to modify the system of Off et al to include the server 200 of Fajkowski in order to arrive at the claimed incentive processor. Further, since the system of Off et al includes a printer 24 for coupon printing (column 3, lines 48-58 of Off et al), contrary to the assertion in the present Office Action, one of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to modify the system of Off et al to include the server 200 of Fajkowski coupled to an incentive printer via an incentive processor bus in order to arrive at the claimed invention.

Moreover, since Fajkowski is directed to a system for implementing a paperless coupon system, Applicant submit that, contrary to the assertion in the present Office Action, one of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to modify the system of Off et al to include printing of rainchecks based on the teachings to the contrary in Fajkowski.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that Off et al and Fajkowski, taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the noted features of the claimed invention.

Applicant respectfully submits that the presently claimed invention provides improved raincheck distribution and redemption, as compared to conventional methods and systems, such as that of Off et al and Fajkowski.

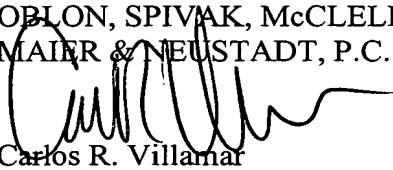
Applicant submits that Off et al and Fajkowski, taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the noted features of the claimed invention.

Based on the above discussion, Applicant respectfully submits that independent Claims 1, 9, 17 and 25 and claims dependent therefrom are patentably distinguishable over Off et al and Fajkowski, taken alone or in combination.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application. The present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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